

# Stage News and Comment on the Plays

## Dramas of Paris Triangles 'Alien to New York Taste

'La Tendresse' Recalls Many Attempts of Late Charles Frohman to 'Educate' Americans to French Stage Standards.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

WHEN Henry Miller referred to the late Charles Frohman in his curtain speech on the stage of the Empire Theater after the second act of "La Tendresse" last week it was the second reminder of the Empire Theater's former manager which had come to the mind of many spectators. How often had they witnessed on that stage and others under the control of the former impresario many such plays from the French! How much of his time and how many thousands of dollars he must have wasted in the effort to make the taste of New York identical with that of Paris. Whether it were Bataille, Kistemaeckers, Bernstein, Nicodemi, Weber, Wolff or any of the contemporaneous French dramatists of his day the result was the same. The New York public could never acquire an appetite for studies of a life so alien to its own sympathies.

Perhaps that is not to be wondered at. Public taste is not easy to direct. It usually follows its own course. The wonder is that American dramatists never took the trouble to study these authors and apply to our own conditions their searching and poignant studies of men and women.

It is of course true that American society in the broadest sense is not preoccupied with various arrangements of the triangle. But it has its interests of the heart. Here men and women love, suffer, marry and part just as surely as they do in any other country. How creditable would it be to the art of the American playwright if such a piece as "La Tendresse," so subtle, so truthful—to other conditions than our own to be sure—and so penetrating in its analysis should be written about our own life.

Foreigners who study us find the complex American character more emotional than any other in the world, led by its feelings rather than its thoughts, sensitive and spontaneous, quick to act and slow to reflect. Such a people is bound to provide the most grateful material for the playwright. Whatever else they may be Americans are not cold. There is plenty of inspiration for the American playwright in their romantic adventures. It appears to be settled that the theatergoing public of this country refuses to concern itself deeply about the social complications of the French or their sentimental problems. Maybe that decision is not important. But it is most deplorable that our playwrights refuse to study the methods of the best of these Frenchmen.

### The Unresolved Chord.

Galsworthy is nearly always in his dramatic expression more or less inconclusive. "Loyalties" is clear enough in most of its phases, but there is the suggestion of uncertainty in the closing phrases of the last act which it might require almost a new play to clear up. When the young officer has shot himself the character that Mr. Galsworthy has labeled "a society girl" says, "Keep faith! We've all done that. It's not enough." Something more than loyalties are evidently necessary in the opinion of the author to clear up such tragedies as the play presents. Is it brotherly love or sympathy, or abolition of all class or racial feeling? The playwright ends his theme on an unresolved chord.

Yet in other respects the fine play at the Gaiety is uncommonly clear. Even the theft by the captain in such urgent need of money is logical enough. He robs the Jew who has made so much by the sale of his horse, which he bought for almost nothing. In that act he is fulfilling what he regards as the loyalty he owes to the young wife who would be shocked by the knowledge that an Italian girl was demanding damages from him.

The eminently sane host in the country house, the survival from an earlier period of English history who presides at the bridge table as Lord St. Erth, and the barrister—all these seem uncommonly natural figures in the development of the story, which gives no appearance of concerning itself with a thesis except in the case of the young Jew, who is battling for his rights against an enemy which has, in his eyes, taken on the proportions of a windmill darkening every air he breathes by its comprehensive flights.

He is not struggling to hold on to his loyalties only against the house party at Meldon Court. He sees the fight against him, or rather his race, in the clubs which do not happen to want him, in the society which tolerates him for his money and in every contact with life that does not involve his own race. Only in this case does the author seem to turn from the directness of his story to emphasize a theory.

This particular character must be firmly underlined. Every "it" must be crossed twice, every "I" doubly dotted. Otherwise "Loyalties" is allowed to proceed logically to its end. Sometimes it seems as if the author had cut a little too close to the bone. He might have been a little expansive in character and humor without damage to the humanity of his play. Emotions are all kept on a minor key. Can even this slight fault keep the drama from seeming the best the English theater has sent here in years?

### The Rose in Bloom.

It was always impossible for Mrs. Blake to look like Tess, although her success in the role formed the cornerstone of her fame. Maybe there is an argument here against the famous theory of types of which so much is heard. Miss Ethel Barrymore is the other hand in the physical incarnation of Hauptmann's heroine. She is the blond Silesian peasant girl, slow in gait and utterance, graceful only in her strength and youth, and finally moving with the heavy tread that used to be so admired for its significance of her physical condition when Santuzza was acted by Eleonora Duse or Emma Calve. Miss Barrymore looks pleasant girl to the life.

And the actress's reflection of her mental states? The revelation of her love for the human and more or less pagan Frann is revealed with the most exquisite delicacy. She tells in her half stolen glances, in the smile that plays over her face like spring sunshine, in the suggestion of a beatific contentment which looks out of her eyes at the magistrate by her

side on the quiet Sunday morning in summer how deeply is the girl enmeshed in this happy passion. Her outbreak in the second act against her accuser is a thrilling incident of her tragedy.

The scene with the wife of the man she loves is another chapter in the history of this peasant love which Miss Barrymore reveals with eloquent clarity. But are all the emotions of Rose in the later scenes of the tragedy comprehensible to the audience?

Indeed, Hauptmann hardly made them so. The girl is overwhelmed by a fate that is too complicated for her. After she has been brought into the maelstrom of the slander suit and led while her friends told the truth, the clouds seem to descend on her. She struggles inarticulately.

Miss Barrymore is, however, quite as expressive as the dramatist allows her to be. "The name 'lonely people,'" writes Manfred George in *The Freeman*, "is not merely an empty distinction given to Vockerat and Anna Mohr. It is the noble brand gleaming on the brows of all Hauptmann characters whom some unknown, gigantic hand has stricken dumb; their hearts bleed in silence and a deadly apathy renders them powerless to act."

## Players in Current Attractions and Others Coming In and Dancer Who Returns



MISS DOROTHY MACKAYE and MISS JEAN ADAIR in "IT'S A BOY" SAM H. HARRIS THEATER

MISS MARGUERITE RISSER in "THE MONSTER" 39TH STREET THEATER



MISS KATHLENE MACDONNELL in "THE THEATER" GUILD PRODUCTION OF "R. U. R." GARRICK



MISS RUTH ST. DENIS in "DANCE IN MATINEES" at the SELWYN



MISS OLIVE TELL in "WHISPERING WIRES" 49TH STREET THEATER



MISS NORA BAYES in "QUEEN OF HEARTS" GEORGE M. COHAN THEATER

### Attractions for Week

#### At Brooklyn Theaters

"Merton of the Movies," the comedy that George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly have made out of Harry Leon Wilson's humorous story, will be given its first presentation on the stage at the Montauk Theater to-morrow night. Glen Hunter will play the title role, that of the small town general store clerk who moves to Hollywood and becomes a great movie star, assisted by a wise little girl he meets on one of the "lots," and Florence Nash will be the girl—the "Montauk girl," as she is known. There are thirty-two speaking parts in the play, and among those in the company are Romaine Callender, J. K. Murray, Gladys Feldman, Edwin Maxwell, John Webster and Lynn Pratt. George C. Tyler and Hugh Ford are making the production and Mr. Ford is himself staging it.

"Spice of 1922," recently at the New York Winter Garden, will begin a week's engagement at the Majestic to-morrow evening. This spectacle of mirth and melody is sponsored by Arman Kalls, and is in two acts and thirty-two scenes. It was written by Jack Laft and staged by Allan K. Foster. Valerka Murat heads the cast, with Nan Halperin and Georgia Price also featured. Other principals include Middle Miller, Bobbs and Nelson, Sam Hearn and Nissa Vornile.

### First Night Calendar.

#### MONDAY.

GARRICK—The Theater Guild will open its fifth season with "R. U. R.," a fantastic melodrama by Karel Capek, Czech-Slovak dramatist. "R. U. R." is the original title of the play and stands for "Rossum's Universal Robots," best translated as "Knowall's Universal Hands." Robots are mechanical men invented to do the work of the world and Rossum's is the factory that makes them. The translation is by Paul Selver, an Englishman attached to the Czech-Slovak Legation of London. Philip Moeller and Miss Agnes Morgan directed the production. Costumes and scenery are by Lee Simonson. In the cast are Basil Sydney, Miss Kathleen MacDonnell, Henry Travers, Moffat Johnston, Louis Calvert and Miss Helen Westley.

#### TUESDAY.

CENTURY ROOF—Morris Gest will present the third program of Nikita Balieff's "Chauve Souris" with a complete change of bill. GEORGE M. COHAN—Miss Nora Bayes presented by Max Spiegel in a new musical play, "Queen of Hearts." Book by Frank Mandel, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein 2d, with additional lyrics by Sydney Mitchell. Lewis Gensler and Dudley Wilkinson wrote the music. The cast includes Miss Edna Hibbard, Florence Morrison and Norma Terris, Arthur Uttry and Frank Woods.

BROADHURST—Max Marcini and Frederick Stanhope will present Monckton Hoff's London comedy drama, "The Faithful Heart." The cast includes Tom Nesbitt, Miss Flora Sheffield, Lionel Pape and George Thorpe.

At the Theatre Mogador, built with the aid of American money, for Frank J. Gould was in the beginning the principal shareholder, the winter program has not yet been decided upon on account of the war transformations which are to be made in the theater. Already considered one of the most beautiful establishments in the city, the management of the Mogador contemplates adding further comfort for its patrons.

## Paris Anticipates a Gala Season in Opera and Drama

All the Noted Stars of the French Stage Are Engaged.

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD.  
New York Herald Bureau, Paris, Sept. 23.

JUDGING from the programs already known in many of the important Paris theaters the season about to begin promises to be a gala one.

All famous actors and actresses of which France boasts are to appear at some time or other during the winter. Practically every artist who at some time or other has registered a big success either at the Opera or Opera Comique will be seen at these houses.

Undoubtedly the most elaborate program put together is that of the Opera Comique, where several new plays are to be shown. Revivals will be reproduced with the creating cast—as near as possible—present. Favorites of Paris theatrical fans are going to have a busy season judging by the work outlined for them. Mlle. Marthe Chenal, Mlle. Breval, Yvonne Gall, Marguerite Carre will both revive and create new roles, and with such stars appearing the management may well look forward to a bright season.

Among the new plays to be shown at the Opera Comique are "Quand la Cloche Sonnera," by M. Bachelet; "Le Hulla," by M. Marcel Samuel-Rousseau, and "La Nautilus," by Reynaldo Hahn. Mlle. Davell will have the principal role in the latter. "Aphrodite" is to enjoy a long but intermittent run with Mlle. Yvonne Gall in the title role.

### Puccini's New Opera Bouffe.

A new opera bouffe by Puccini and Zsaiid to be extremely funny—"Glanni Schichi"—is still another of the new plays to be shown. New music will also be heard for the first time at the Opera Comique. Most of the compositions obtained prizes at the Paris Conservatoire and it is expected that the composers themselves will direct the music when played.

While the Comedie Francaise has not yet announced its winter program, it is understood that one of the first new plays to see the footlights will be "Le Chevalier de Colomb" or the "Knight of Columbus." Mlle. Ventura and M. Charles Le Bargy will have the principal roles while the latter will also act as stage manager.

At the Renaissance, where Mme. Cora Laparcerie is to resume active management very shortly, the season will begin with the revival of "La Danseuse Rouge," the play that caused so much comment last year, many considering it as an apology for the crimes of the former well known spy Mata Hari.

Cor Laparcerie plays the chief role and the plot depicts a woman who is arrested on a false charge of espionage and shot by six soldiers wearing blue horizon colored uniforms. Later Mlle. Laparcerie will produce a new play by her father-in-law, Jean Richepin of the French Academy, to be known as "Les Cercueurs d'Or" (the Gold Seekers). The play, said to be in full of adventure, will have a cast of sixty people with four star roles, one of them to be taken by Mlle. Laparcerie. After that will come "La Vagabonde," a four act play by Mme. Colette, well known here as a woman journalist, in collaboration with M. Leopold Marchand.

Smaller theaters appear contented with the revivals they have decided to show. Typical of this is the Theatre Dejazet where "Cheri de son Conclerc" (His Janitor's Darling) is enjoying a crowd of house full of admirers. The play is slightly on the light side, a bed appearing in the third act on which "accidentally" three persons meet and exchange somewhat suggestive phrases.

At the Theatre Antoine, a new play by Mlle. Colette, well known here as a woman journalist, in collaboration with M. Leopold Marchand.

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